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CONTACT

Krissy Bailey, ITVS

415-356-8383, ext. 254

krissy\_bailey@itvs.org

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**TALES OF THE WARIA — A DOC DEFYING PRESUMPTIONS  
ABOUT GENDER AND ISLAM — PREMIERES  
IN JUNE ON THE WORLD CHANNEL**

***An Intimate Look at Biological Men Who Live Openly as Women in One of the World's Largest Muslim Countries***

(San Francisco, CA, May 10, 2012) — Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population. It is also home to a transgender community known as the waria, biological men who live openly as women. [Tales of the Waria](#) follows four characters from this little-known community as they search for romance and companionship. At turns comical and heartbreaking, the film uncovers a world that not only defies our preconceptions of gender and Islam, but also reveals our endless capacity as human beings to search for love — whatever the consequences. Directed by Kathy Huang, *Tales of the Waria* premieres on [Global Voices](#) Sunday, June 3 at 10 PM on the [WORLD Channel](#) ([check local listings](#)).

At a time when transgender communities around the world are largely ignored or misrepresented in the media, *Tales of the Waria* intimately explores how the members of one such community confront issues of love, family, and faith. Though Indonesia's tolerant form of Islam permits warias to live openly and without fear of physical harm, they remain a marginalized community whose life choices are often constrained in significant and sometimes tragic ways. Shot over several years with warias serving as advisors and film crewmembers, the film provides unprecedented access to a community that dares to live differently from the norm, despite what consequences may await them. Through their emotional journeys, our notions of love, gender, and Islam are forever changed.

**Director's Statement**

When I first read an article about the waria in 2005, I was amazed to learn that a transgender community could exist so visibly in the world's largest Muslim country. I took several Indonesian language courses and traveled to Indonesia in the summer of 2008 to experience the lives of the waria firsthand. I discovered a world full of contradictions, tragedy, and heroism — one that I knew had to be shared with larger audiences. I invited the waria to join me in creating a documentary on their favorite topic: love. They were thoroughly enthusiastic. Waria elders provided counsel at every stage of the project. Gaya Celebes, a non-profit organization staffed by waria and gay members, provided translators and film crewmembers. Together, we are venturing forth on a project that promises to be an unprecedented glimpse into a little known but truly remarkable community — a community that not only challenges our assumptions about gender, masculinity, and Islam, but also reveals our endless capacity as human beings to find, despite great hardship and disappointment, continual happiness and meaning in our lives.

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## **About the Filmmaker**

**Kathy Huang (Producer/Director/Cinematographer)** first developed a passion for documentary filmmaking in the dusty fields of South Texas. Inspired by her experiences teaching at-risk youth in a rural high school, she produced her first documentary, *Scribble's Creations* (2004). Shot with the help of her former students, the film follows a teenager coming of age along the US-Mexico border. Her subsequent short films have continued to explore underrepresented communities confronting unique challenges. *Night Visions* (2005), a soldier's meditation on the Iraq War, screened at the Tribeca Film Festival and SILVERDOCS and received the War and Peace Award from the Media That Matters Film Festival. *Miss Chinatown U.S.A.* (2006), the story of a young woman's journey through a Chinese-American beauty pageant, also screened at the Tribeca Film Festival and was broadcast on regional PBS stations. Kathy received a Master's in Documentary Film Production from Stanford University and currently works in New York City as a producer and shooter. *Tales of the Waria* is her debut feature-length documentary.

The film is part of Diverse Muslim Voices, a multi-year media initiative to build awareness and improve understanding in the U.S. of diverse Muslim societies. Funding is provided by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art.

## **ABOUT GLOBAL VOICES**

Produced by ITVS International, *Global Voices* is a 26-week series bringing internationally themed documentaries made by U.S.-based and international filmmakers to a national audience. This season, the series will feature the U.S. premieres of thirteen documentaries funded by ITVS International, as well as encore broadcasts of other acclaimed ITVS programs. In addition to the WORLD broadcast, select episodes will be available online post broadcast — via iTunes, Amazon, Netflix, and on PBS's Video player through <http://video.pbs.org>. For the complete lineup and schedule, visit [www.itvs.org/series/global-voices](http://www.itvs.org/series/global-voices).

## **ABOUT WORLD**

WORLD is produced and distributed by WGBH Boston, WNET New York Public Media, and American Public Television (APT) in association with the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA). The WORLD channel is available in markets representing more than 52% of US TV households, and 12 of the top 20 markets, including New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Dallas, Boston and Atlanta. Funding for WORLD is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting ([CPB](#)).

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